

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## *What Memories Are We Making Today?*

STEVEN ANDERSON

**T**he Forest History Society celebrates its 60th Anniversary in 2006. Aldo Leopold once wrote, "In June as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them." So it was in June 1946, that F.K. Weyerhaeuser, on behalf of the Weyerhaeuser family, founded the Forest Products History Foundation under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society. Later to become the Forest History Society, the organization has made significant and permanent contributions to its members and society as a whole for 60 years.

F.K. Weyerhaeuser's gesture was one of many notable firsts in 1946: the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly was held; the Atomic Energy Commission was established; the Xerographic photocopying process was invented; the first electric clothes dryers and suntan lotions were produced for consumers; and Tide, the first detergent designed for automatic clothes washing machines, was introduced. I do not know how many times during the last 60 years that Tide became "new and improved," but certainly the Forest History Society can periodically stake a claim to such an achievement.

Perhaps the most important achievement is the successful development of the Society over the last six decades. It has been a daily, long-term, dawn-past-dusk endeavor. That's one reason anniversaries are so important. They give us a chance to take stock of where we've been, how we've gotten to this point, and where we're headed next. So what should we remember and focus on as we recognize 60 years of excellence by the Forest History Society?

### **PRESERVING OUR FOREST HERITAGE**

FHS is unique as the only international organization solely dedicated to preserving forest and conservation history and assuring its outreach. From the Alvin J. Huss Archives, which contain the records of industry and conservation organizations worldwide, to the more than 8,000 volumes of the Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Library, there is no more comprehensive compilation of materials related to forest history in the world.

### **RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS**

FHS fosters scholarship by enabling studies related to forest conservation and use over time. Several databases such as the Environmental History Bibliography provide researchers, educators, journalists, and scholars worldwide with the tools they need to bring historical integrity to their work. Since 1958, the Society has published a quarterly academic journal that engages environmental historians and other writers. With over 50 book-



length publications to its credit and the *Forest History Today* magazine, the Society provides a critical outlet for relevant research.

### **EDUCATION**

The Forest History Society helps young people and adults understand and appreciate the varied lessons of forest history. Through programs such as the middle school curriculum, *If Trees Could Talk*, and the Lynn W. Day Distinguished Lectureship series, students of all ages learn to recognize the value that forests have had to individuals and societies throughout history.

### **ORAL HISTORIES**

When a person dies, a library is lost. That is why the Society has conducted over 300 oral history interviews of workers and leaders in forestry and conservation, providing a record that is found nowhere else in historical documentation. Some have been entered into the Congressional Record, and all provide relevant background to the lessons of history.

### **INFORMING PUBLIC OPINION**

The Society plays a crucial role in supporting the development of rational resource policies that will lead to a sustainable future by working closely with journalists and the media to bring the lessons of forest history to bear on the most pressing issues in resource management. The FHS web site has been given the Society of Environmental Journalist's highest rating for its usefulness to journalists.

These are just a few of the many achievements for which the members of the Society can be proud. Such success has certainly been due to dedicated professional staff but also to the financial support from individuals and organizations that the Society has enjoyed. Such contributions to the Society are as yeast is to a loaf of bread—expanding the scope and reach of its programs.

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As we pause to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Forest History Society, we are also completing the recognition of another anniversary, the centennial of the USDA Forest Service in 2005. FHS has been a helpful partner with the agency during its centennial, having contributed several book-length publications to the effort, conducted oral histories, and advised on *The Greatest Good* film. This issue of *Forest History Today* also recognizes the centennial by taking a new look at historical documents that have, in some way, had a significant impact on forestry and resource conservation in North America. We are pleased to have guest editor Char Miller and our incoming editor James G. Lewis assist us in this regard.